

# CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS, ARE THE FEET OF HIM THAT BRINGETH GOOD TIDINGS, THAT PUBLISHETH PEACE."—Isa. lii, 7.

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## THE QUESTION ANSWERED—IS MAN A FREE AGENT?

A SHORT SERMON.

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. Isaiah lv, 10, 11.

From time immemorial there has been a wonderful bustle in the world, a bustle of opinions. Fanaticism has generated whims, and such has been the generosity of mankind, that whims have been adopted with parental fondness, and nursed, and finally dignified as opinions. And when a man becomes possessed of an opinion, like one of old, he says, "I also will shew mine opinion." Man has been characterized, in contradistinction to other animals, as "the tool-making animal." Among the theological tools which men have manufactured, *free agency* is the one which has puzzled its admirers, more than all other tools which have been invented, to define its powers, and explain its uses. Notwithstanding its value, or utility, might be questioned from the fact of the difficulty, or almost impossibility of ascertaining any way of making it profitable, like some other useless appendages of the world we live in, or rather of its fashions, this appears to be valued in an exact ratio with its utter worthlessness. I will not venture to hazard even a conjecture of who was the legitimate father of the whim, or opinion of man's *free agency*. I will only venture to be positive in asserting the fact, that all the opinions and whims which have been generated since, have failed in the attempt to divine a use for it. It is not uncommon to hear men argue about man's *accountability* to his Maker—man's *dependance* on his Maker for power to perform any and every volition—man's *obligation* to his Maker to serve and obey him as paramount to all possible adverse claims, and wind up by uttering the sagacious remark, "But I believe man is a *free agent*!"

What is *free agency*? Who can answer this question satisfactorily? Not those who profess to believe in this doctrine; for even its advocates and admirers have disputed or differed with each other; and although they have fellowshiped the hypothesis, they have never yet been able to explain it; but all of them agree that man is a *free agent*! From time immemorial men have been successful in conveying their ideas on those subjects which have the indelible impress of truth to recommend them, namely, simplicity. When it has been affirmed of man that he is an impotent being, the idea has been conveyed that man is a weak, feeble being. When it has been said of man that he is a dependant being it has always been understood to signify that man is not of himself able to sustain his life and well-being. And when it has been asserted of man that he is a creature, the idea communicated is, that man received his being, and did not make himself. But when man is called, or yclept a *free agent*, the only idea conveyed is that there is an idea that man is a *free agent*. To use a quaint simile, the reasoner "leaps at stars, and fastens in the mud."

*Free agent*.—Here are two words—how they

ever happened to come in conjunction, I never could learn. Here they are, like man and wife; with this difference however, that no honest man in the possession of his senses, whatever may be his opinion of the origin of the conjunction in the one case, will ever have the hardihood to affirm in the other, "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Surely these terms separately considered, must have a legitimate meaning, as much as the terms light and darkness; and these significations must be arbitrary, or it will follow that they have no legitimate meaning. It would puzzle all the polemical whim makers in christendom to prove that light signifies darkness, or vice versa. And if they should say they *believe* that light is darkness, they would then offer the hackneyed argument which has thus far bolstered up the hypothesis of free agency.

What is the legitimate signification of the term *agent*? Ans. *A subordinate actor, or one who possesses a delegated power.* This is the only correct definition when the subject is a dependant sentient being. Inanimate matter is an agent, when moved by an intelligent power, which power controls it. The elements, therefore, are agents, and are emphatically so, when employed by the Deity as the ministers of his will. An examination of my text will illustrate this truth.

Let us reader attempt to analyze the hypothesis in question, by testing it by such means as scripture and reason have furnished. Is the ocean a *free agent*, when Jehovah commands the winds to lash its waters, and pile its waves in heaps, like mountains? Are the various mineral compounds which the solid earth is made of, *free agents*, when the Divinity moves within it—when the everlasting hills are troubled, and the foundations of the mountains tremble? Are these agents, when the might of Omnipotence impels them into action, *free* to act, or to slumber in their native quiescence? What does the term *free* signify? Ans. *Liberty*—nay, more, *independence*. Are the elements independent of their Maker? Have they liberty to act, or to refuse to act, when their Maker wills them to motion? Can they resist, when an Irresistible Power impels them into action? No!

But man is a sentient being—he is not wind, water, or a mineral, he—Reader, he is a compound of all these, and something more. One question, rightly answered, will settle the controversy. *Is man a creature?* Now it must be admitted that the Creator is all that man is, and as much more as amounts to infinity. For all that man is, came from, and is the gift of God. Reader, Can you make a *free agent* of any being short of Omnipotence? Startle not at the strangeness of the position that the Deity cannot be an agent, for the Deity, alone is *free*; and if he cannot be a *free agent*, there can be no such thing as a *free agent* in the universe. I shall prove this.

I have stated that the term *free* signifies independence. That is, "not being under necessity or restraint, physical or moral." (Vide Web. Lex.) It would be a monstrous absurdity, a rank falsehood, to affirm of the dependant, ignorant creature man, that he is free, independent, and under no necessity, physical or moral. This can only be affirmed of the Deity. Webster defines the term *agent*—"1. An actor, one that exerts power,

or has the power to act. 2. An active power or cause; that which has the power to produce an effect. 3. A substitute, deputy or factor, one entrusted with the business of another; an attorney; a minister." The last definition I have considered as applicable to man, as a sentient being. That is, man can only be considered in the light of a subordinate actor, and possessing a delegated power. For, strictly speaking, the first two definitions of the term *agent* can only be applied to the Deity; as he alone has, and possesses in, and of, himself, *power*, has the power to act—is the cause, emphatically, which can produce effects. The Scriptures support my position, by affirming that "all power belongs to God." I have shown, therefore, from the united evidence of scripture and reason, that in a proper sense, the Great God, alone, is a *Free Agent*! The candid and intelligent reader will at once perceive and acknowledge, that no created, impotent, and dependant being can strictly be considered an *agent*, in the sense of being an actor, otherwise than in a subordinate, and dependant capacity. Even this holds good when a man acts as an agent, substitute, deputy, factor, attorney, or minister for his fellow man.—Therefore in this case the idea of man being *free*, and at the same time being an agent, is the maximum of absurdity. Man, therefore, can in no sense be considered a *free agent*. The phrase, when applied to man, is a contradiction in terms. When a man acts as an agent for his fellow man, he is under a *moral restraint or necessity*. When a man acts in the various relations in which he may be considered both physically and morally dependant in his being and power, in this world, in his accountability to his Maker, his agency is circumscribed within narrow limits, and he is not free in any possible correct sense of the term. It would be a waste of words to examine the nonsensical jargon which polemical writers have introduced to prove that man is a *free agent*. Pope, making a free use of the license which has been granted to the poet, "got along" the smoothest on the subject of man's freedom and necessity, by saying, that God,

Binding nature fast in fate,  
Left free the human will.

Reader, we must let this pass for the best definition of a *free agent*—a man whose nature is *bound fast in fate*, is a *free agent*!

The earth is an agent. The rain and the snow that cometh down from heaven and watereth the earth, are agents. But they are only agents in a qualified sense; as they do not possess the power, of themselves, to produce effects, any farther than they are employed as the ministers of God's will. It is the concurrence of the causes which produce the effects. The wisdom and power of the Deity are exerted to cooperate through these agents; the Deity being the efficient agent or cause. It has been proved to a demonstration, that the earth is merely the *matrix* in which the vegetable receives its being, nourishment and growth. The concurring causes or agents, are water, air, and the light and heat from the sun. Are these *free agents*? Can these agents choose or refuse to act, when the Deity wills a *concurrence* of causes to produce a certain result?

I shall endeavor to show that this hypothesis of "man's *free agency*," is incompatible with God's *moral* sovereignty, as certainly, as the hypothesis of the free agency of the agents which



produce by their concurrent action, or influence, the various products of the vegetable kingdom, would be incompatible with all rational ideas of God's natural sovereignty, or dominion over the elements, or material world.

The natural philosopher knows that the earth, so far from being diminished by the growth of vegetables in its matrix, actually receives an addition to its solid and tangible contents; by the decomposition of the vegetable matter which has been nourished on its bosom. That a forest of oaks, of sufficient magnitude to furnish materials for a thousand men of war ships, the united gravity of which would equal a moderately sized mountain, do not by their growth and production diminish the specific gravity of that portion of the earth which has sustained them, so much as the weight of a feather. The candid reader, therefore, must acknowledge the evidence which I have derived from the figure, or simile used in the Scriptures, to explain, illustrate and enforce the truth of God's absolute sovereignty, and the entire dependence of all created beings, to be irresistible. The figure is one which is familiar to all men. The rain from heaven—the growth of vegetables, are truths so palpably evident to our senses, that we are compelled to acknowledge them. Hence the declaration of Paul, (Rom. i. 20.) "For the invisible things of him [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even his eternal power and Godhead.*" Jesus, the Son of God, (Matt. xiii.) compares mankind to a field—the word, to seed sown in a field. He asserts that the field is *Kosmon*, mankind universally.

Well, this is very true, about the word, the seed, and the field, or world; but does not Jesus say, that some of the seed fell upon stony places, and some among thorns? This seed produced no fruit. The seed which fell upon good ground produced fruit. Shall we therefore conclude, that the sower expected stones and thorns, to nourish the seed, and produce fruit? Shall we conclude that the stones and thorns were free agents, and exercised their power of *refusing* to nourish the seed? Supposing the stones and thorns had made an effort to make the seed grow, do we not read that the sun scorched the plant which grew from the seeds which fell upon the stony places, because they had no deepness of earth? And the thorns sprung up and choked the plants. The fault in the one case, is justly attributable to the stones, and the sun; in the other to the thorns. In the last case, it is evident the earth was not to blame; for the fact of its supporting the thorn, proves conclusively, that if the sower had sown the good seed before the thorns had taken root, the good seed would have grown, or taken root likewise. In the one case, the stones, and the sun's heat would prevent the growth of any vegetable. In the other case, the earth received the thorns, because nothing but thorns could be procured—the thorns were growing before the good seed was tried. Reader, we have here irrefragable proof that man is not a free agent. For the ground which was rendered unfruitful by the stones, and by the thorns, was under a physical restraint, which rendered it impossible for it to support the growth of the good seed. This is not all. The case presented has stronger features to prove the doctrine I have inculcated. Some of the seed fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Pray, who was the free agent in this instance, who must father the blame?

Reader, the mystery is cleared away by Christ's explanation of his parable. The good ground, which was capable of nourishing the seed that it brought forth fruit, was introduced by Jesus as a figure of *understanding*. As none but good ground can receive and nourish seed, so no man can receive and treasure up the truths of God in his heart, except he *understands the truth*. The

parable will bear examining. The sower, for wise purposes, casts his seed as described. The sower owns the field. How would a good farmer manage under such circumstances? Would he not clear the stones from his land? Would he not root out the thorns? Or, think you, would he fly into a passion, and condemn his land to perpetual sterility?

Calvin, what sayest thou, to this? Why most assuredly, that the sower will be as much honored, yea, even glorified by his sterile, as by his fruitful land. He has willed that the stones and the thorns shall forever prevent any seed from growing.

Hopkins, what has been thy notion about this matter? Why, really, I cannot exactly agree with friend Calvin; I am more consistent. But, I believe the stones and thorns will glorify and honor the sower as much as Calvin believes they will. All seed sown in such ground will *certainly perish*; notwithstanding, if only one single grain of seed should grow, it would answer the purpose as well as a whole crop.

Arminius, I would have thy opinion, also, what sayest thou? Why, verily, I do not agree with either, Calvin or Hopkins. Stones and thorns will nourish seed as well as any thing; provided they are only willing. They are free agents—that is, the stony places, and the thorny places, have no excuse; they can make the seed grow, if they will only try; and if they don't try, then the field, in my opinion should never be cultivated. I would even pull down the fences, and leave it common forever.

"Search the Scriptures," says Jesus. "They are able to make you wise unto salvation," says another; who is entitled to credit. Shall stones forever prevent the growth of the good seed? Shall thorns choke the plant forever? Shall the wilderness never be fruitful? Who, or what is the unfruitful wilderness? "Zion is a wilderness," says the prophet. Ah, Zion a wilderness! What! Stones and thorns in Zion! "For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord." (Isa. li. 3.) The connexion of my text says, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree." It appears, then, that the wilderness, waste, and desert place shall be fruitful like Eden. That the field shall not always lie waste, nor the seed be choked by thorns.

Reader, the phraseology of our text is deserving of careful attention. The language is imperative. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud," &c. Yes, *maketh it*—forces, compels it, by an irresistible influence or power, "to bring forth and bud; that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater." There are two things for our consideration. First—the earth's agency in producing the fruit. Second—the connexion between the means used, and the end produced, or the effect.

What agency has the earth in producing the vegetable? Can the earth in the first place fit and prepare itself for receiving the seed, or germ of the plant? Can the earth bring forth and bud, without the fructifying influence of the rain from heaven? No! Can the earth refuse to bring forth and bud when the rain falls, or by any means prevent the budding of the fruit, or its final progress to perfection? No! The earth then is the *passive recipient of the blessing*, and acts by an influence wholly irresistible. For the concurring causes of sunshine and atmospheric influence or agency, are in the hands of the giver of the rain, who is all and in all. The earth, therefore, is an agent—power is communicated to this agent, in the shape of other agents, rain, air, sun shine, and all concur to produce an effect. But all of these agents, consequently the earth among the rest, are under a *physical necessity*. That physical necessity is as power-

ful and irresistible as the Omnipotence of Jehovah. The universe contains no power which can prevent God's rain from heaven *making* the earth bring forth and bud. Reader, this *passive* earth is as much a *free agent* as Saul of Tarsus was, when a great light shone from heaven, and made his *understanding* bring forth and bud, to give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, in the Gentile church, or in the wilderness of Zion. I will give you a reason for this, (although my text has done it for me,) as follows: The great light that shone upon Paul's understanding, and made, compelled him to bring forth and bud, shone, and came from the same Heaven that the rain comes from which makes the earth bring forth and bud; and the light from Heaven is equally irresistible in its influence with the rain from Heaven; for the unanswerable reason, that both came from the same place, and the same power gave them their mission. All the influence of the stones and the thorns, in Saul's mind, could not then prevent the word which proceeded forth out of God's mouth. "*It shall not return unto me void*," is the declaration of the King of Heaven.

Consider the immutable relation between cause and effect. The means used are devised by Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge—prompted by unbounded goodness—Almighty Power, with irresistible influence, makes the earth bring forth and bud; and it made Saul of Tarsus, a persecuting bigot, the humble Paul, counting all things as nothing save the excellency of the knowledge of the wisdom of God's kingdom, manifested through Christ. Therefore the Sovereignty of God is incompatible with the hypothesis of the *free agency* of any created being, or thing. *I will—and thou shalt*—is the language of the sovereign God.

Our text draws a parallel of influence or power in making the earth bring forth and bud; and the word of God eventuating in producing holiness, and consequent happiness in the understanding and hearts of mankind. The universality of the productions of the earth, is in our text, the ground work. Wherever man exists, the earth brings forth and buds. "So shall my word be." Every drop of rain that falls, is a witness of the truth of God's impartial goodness. Every blade of grass, every sprout and branch, whether of the majestic oak or of the tender vine, or the blushing rose, or variegated flowers which beautify the earth, all are witnesses that God's word shall prosper, and man be saved with an everlasting salvation. "The grass withereth—the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever." For "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken." (Isa. xl.)

The doctrine of man's free agency is liable to the same objection which has been successfully opposed to the South Carolina Nullification. Sovereignty must exist somewhere. If man possesses the power to choose and refuse, and is free to exercise that power, he is independent of his Maker; that is, if words have any meaning. If man has not the power to choose and refuse, but is free to choose or refuse, then the question is placed in a light too ridiculous to merit serious argument. It would be like disputing about the liberty that horses and oxen possess, to choose between walking on the earth, or flying in the air, like birds. A freedom of action, that is, a liberty to act, without power to act, is a contradiction in terms. It matters not whether the restraint under which the creature is placed, be physical or moral; in either case, it is an insuperable obstacle to action. I know of no restraint, or law, under which the blind man's liberty of seeing is abridged, but the physical re-



restraint—the man has not eyes to see with. In the other case, I mean that of the *free agent*—the man who is at perfect liberty to choose or refuse the truth, the only difficulty in the way is, that the man has not *understanding* to know and receive the truth. And the horse and the ox could fly as well as the eagle, if those animals possessed as good wings, proportioned to their specific gravity, etc.

The doctrine of "man's free agency, therefore, stripped of all its false glosses, and laid bare to the inspection of an unprejudiced and intelligent mind, consists in this—a free agent is a man who is at perfect liberty to choose or refuse both good and evil; with this draw back, that the free agent is so deficient in his *understanding* that he don't know good from evil; and is not only more likely to prefer darkness to light, but has actually done so. And this explains Pope's logic, of "*Binding nature fast in fate,*" and at the same time, "*leaving free the human will.*"

The case of Pharaoh will help to illustrate this subject. The advocates of the dogma of man's free agency, must contend that Pharaoh acted under no restraint, physical or moral. I shall show that he acted under a moral restraint; and, consequently, was as much a free agent as the elements are when they are moved by the irresistible energies of Omnipotence.

Paul in his epistle to the Romans justifies God's ways to man, by showing that God's purpose is man's eventual holiness and happiness; and that the seeming incongruity which exists in the mind of the unenlightened, properly understood, is strong evidence of God's merciful designs, and furnishes a guaranty that his benevolent purpose will be fully accomplished. Among other cases, introduced by Paul to enforce and illustrate the sublime truths he was desirous of communicating to his believing brethren, is that of Pharaoh, as follows:—"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Rom. ix, 17.) These words have a definite signification. They neither express nor imply, that God created Pharaoh in the first instance, and hardened his heart in the second instance, to confirm him in sin, and damn him, by consigning him to endless misery. The passage however clearly expresses or implies this—that God raised Pharaoh to be king of Egypt, for the purpose of making use of him as an agent to extend the knowledge of his name, and make his power known to the world of mankind, at that time, to a certain extent, in contradistinction to the idols of the nations. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart does not appear in the account given of it, to amount to any thing more than preventing the influence of the plagues sent as a punishment for his obduracy, from altering his original intention of keeping the Israelites in bondage, by giving power to Pharaoh's magicians to perform similar wonders to those performed by Aaron. By these means, the Israelites were made acquainted with God's power to protect them; and were encouraged to march boldly out of Egypt with all their substance.

When Moses and Aaron presented themselves to Pharaoh, and demanded, in the name of the Lord, permission for the Israelites to depart out of Egypt, Pharaoh asked, who is the Lord, that I should obey him? He was ignorant of the being, and character of the true God. It was therefore natural, and I may add consistent with the ideas he had of propriety, to refuse to consent to the commands of a being, of whose right to command him he was entirely ignorant. Moses and Aaron, therefore, were instructed by the God of heaven how to conduct. They accordingly exhibited evidences of God's power. Pharaoh's magicians succeeded in doing the

same wonders. This convinced Pharaoh, as a matter of course, that Moses' and Aaron's God was no greater than the Gods of Egypt. Was Pharaoh a *free agent* all this time? Can a man be said to act free from any *moral restraint*, while his understanding of the true state and condition of the circumstances which surround him, is darkened by a deception of appearances to that degree, that he is kept in ignorance of things as they are, by evidences exhibited daily to his senses of the existence of things as they are not? Can we suppose that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Moses and Aaron, had they been in Pharaoh's place, equally ignorant of the true God, and constantly deceived by appearances, would have acted differently? Certainly not. God raised up Pharaoh under the circumstances in which he was placed, for a certain purpose. That purpose was guaranteed by all the power and wisdom of Omnipotence. The moral restraint under which Pharaoh acted, was as overwhelming in its influence as the war of the elements, or the waves of the sea, which closed the great drama.

Matter for illustration can be found in the history of our own country, without referring to ancient times, and foreign nations—among professing christians, instead of ignorant idolators. Were the pious puritans in Massachusetts *free agents*, when they barbarously imprisoned and hanged inoffensive men and women, because they were accused of witchcraft? I will seriously ask the descendants of these Puritans, who are the advocates of the hypothesis of man's free agency, and admirers of the characters of their persecuting progenitors, to explain the difficulty? That these Puritans hanged numbers of poor creatures on the pretence that they were guilty of the crime of witchcraft, and cruelly persecuted the inoffensive Quakers for their opinions, cannot be denied. Pray, what was the cause of these free agents conducting in this manner? That no physical necessity, or restraint caused them to conduct in this wicked manner, is too evident to require proof. Unless they acted under a moral necessity or restraint, which will palliate their cruelties and shedding of blood they must have acted with their eyes open to the full enormity of the wickedness they were perpetrating, and their posterity should blush to own their lineage. It appears, therefore, that all those who claim consanguinity with the persecuting Puritans, should be careful how they handle the doctrine of free agency, lest they cut their fingers with it.

Apply the same reasoning to John Calvin, when he roasted Servetus. Was that barbarous and abominably cruel act committed while the actor was *free*? while Calvin was under no physical or moral restraint to induce him to outrage humanity? If so, his name should be hung up on high, and made the mark for execration to shoot at!

The hypothesis of man's free agency is a palpable contradiction of my text. The Sovereign God, by his prophet, illustrates the irresistible energy or influence of his word, in accomplishing his pleasure, and prospering in the thing for which it is sent, by introducing the figure of vegetable productions, which are obviously caused by the power of God, through the agency of concurring causes, wholly dependant on him. "So shall my word be which goeth forth out of my mouth." And to show to the world of mankind that God's word is powerful, a mode of expression is made use of which sets cavilling at defiance—for it is added, "It shall not return unto me void." The rain from heaven never returned void; or having failed to accomplish the end for which it was sent. "So shall my word be which goeth forth out of my mouth," is the declaration of JEREMIAH. "It shall not return to me void—it shall accomplish

that which I please—it shall prosper in the thing whereto it was sent." Can language be plainer? Can declarations be more imperative? No!

Where is the objector? Cannot the stickler for the hypothesis of man's free agency find any thing to urge in contradiction to the Creator? Yes. *Man is not willing.* Well, man is not willing—Reader, I pray you to ponder well the following question—If the Sovereign God wills one thing, and man wills another, who shall give up? and who shall prevail? Shall the rain return void to Heaven? Shall the word fail? "It shall not return to me void."

Surely Christ said to the wicked Jews, "*Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.*" These free agents would not come. True—let us inquire the reason given why these free agents would not come. "God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see," &c. Surely it must be admitted that these free agents' ability to go where they could not see the way, must have been so small and insignificant, that it would be very strange if it should prove an overmatch for Omnipotence. Strange, passing strange, Reader, that the objector should overlook the declaration that "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." In other words—God gave them eyes that they should *not* see, that his word should not return unto him void. Evidence direct to the point can be found in Christ, who was the word—the way—the truth—and the life. Well, Christ the word, said to the Jews, "I would have gathered you together," &c. "*but ye would not.*" True, these free agents refused to have Christ gather them together. But Christ said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." Why not confess the truth at once, that Christ told these blind free agents, "Ye shall not see me until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

What account do we find in the Scriptures of man's power, ability, or free agency? I answer that man, yea, the creation, mankind, were "*made subject to vanity.*" Mark the phraseology. *Made* subject to vanity—not become subject to vanity *after* they were made, by the exercise of this wonderful free agency. This free agency would most truly be a wonderful faculty, or quality in man, if it enabled him to alter the constitution of his being, and effect a change in the appointments of the king of heaven. Do we not read that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps?" That even "the preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue cometh from God?" Do we not read that "as clay is in the hands of the potter, so men are in the hands of their Maker?" *Free agents!* Free to do what? The book declares, "to do good, they have no knowledge." Take your free agent—examine him—estimate his qualities, and define his powers, and what is he? Why, he is a free agent. He cannot direct his steps—the preparation of his heart, and the answer of his tongue, cometh from God—to do Good, he has no knowledge—he is like a piece of clay in the hands of the potter—he was made subject to vanity, at first—but he is a *free agent*. A free agent without understanding; without knowledge; without power. Examine him critically, and he is "sans every thing," save his *free agency!* Pray, what is this poor, ignorant thing good for?

Paul asked, "Who hath first given unto him, [God] and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" Paul adds: "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever." All things are of God, as the cause or author—through God as the only source of power; to God as the owner of all. "God



alone shall be exalted;" is the language of the Bible.

The hypothesis of man's free agency is inconsistent with reason; incompatible with all rational conceptions of man's impotence and ignorance, as man is described, and the constitution of his being explained in the scriptures; and utterly irreconcilable with the scripture account of God's moral sovereignty. The hypothesis of man's free agency is the sole foundation of the doctrine of contingencies. If so much as *one contingent* can exist in the Universe, then there exists a possibility that God may be disappointed, and his wise, merciful and good designs, be for ever frustrated by this one contingent. If mankind were free agents, in any correct sense of the phrase, then every man would stand in opposition to God, a contingent with might, or might not subvert his plans, and defeat his purposes. This can never be. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

H. F.

#### FEMALE PIETY.—A SKETCH.

Written for a Young Lady's Album.

I saw her first in the sunny hour of gaiety and bliss, walking amid a garden of flowers, herself the fairest blossom. Health smiled upon her rosy cheek, joy beamed from her sparkling eye, the smile of contentment and peace played gracefully around her cherry lips, and her rich flowing tresses hung like the clustering vine down her lily white neck, while she wreathed and presented me with a most fragrant chaplet of flowers. Modesty, sprightliness, innocence and purity marked her every action and her every word. And I said, "she is lovely indeed! and who in the world that has feelings and taste, could see, and not admire—could behold, and not love such a bright being?"

I saw her again. It was in the temple of worship, where the thronged assembly had congregated to worship, with united heart and voice, the great Eternal.—She bowed with the multitude in reverence and adoration to the Father of all mercies and the God of all grace; and seemed to listen with heartfelt rapture to the touching descriptions of Divine love, and the pathetic illustrations of the immutable and exhaustless benevolence of the Deity, in the great and glorious plan of the redemption and salvation of a world of sinners, as they rolled in peals of heavenly eloquence from the lips of the man of God. And the tear of sacred joy moistened her eye, and the smile of divine satisfaction beamed from her animated and expressive countenance, while she exultingly exclaimed, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." And I said "She is still more lovely than when I first saw her in the garden of flowers."

I saw her yet again. She was bending o'er the couch of sickness; it was the death bed of her aged father. She had but recently followed to the grave an amiable mother, and that most deeply afflicting bereavement was still fresh in her mind. Every attention was bestowed on

her yet remaining parent that the tenderest assiduity and the most devoted filial affection could suggest. Her hand seemed never to be weary in presenting the cordial to his parched lips, and bathing his burning temple, and employing every means within her reach for the purpose of restoring her venerated sire once more to health. But all was unavailing; the hand of death was upon him; and after giving her his patriarchal benediction, commending her to the kind care and protection of Heaven, he embraced her, his only child, for the last time on earth, and closed his eyes forever! Her eyes caught the last ray of his ———. For a short space, the deadness of silence alone seemed to reign; she bowed herself under the mighty hand of God, like the weeping willow, which although it bends, and because it bends, does not break. She wept; but her tears were not those of despair; for despair never shed a tear; they were the tribute of virtuous affection, like those which Jesus shed at the grave of Lazarus. She stood now in the solitude and luxury of her own unparalleled grief, a lonely orphan, left to the cold charity of an unfeeling world; but her eye and her heart were uplifted to Heaven, and her soul was in holy and calm reconciliation with its inscrutable but wise decrees. And while she exclaimed, "*Thy will O God be done*—O my dear, dear father; my tender, my beloved mother, though I shall behold your faces no more in time; yet I shall meet you both among the happy spirits of the blessed, when the morning of an immortal day shall dawn upon the ransomed world—"

We shall meet on that shore where no flowers shall fade:

Where sorrow and death shall no longer invade;  
Where the songs of the blest shall be our employ,  
And mourning give place to the fulness of joy."

I then thought her the most interesting and lovely being I had ever beheld; far, far surpassing all that I could have conceived of her from seeing her in the bright day of prosperity, either in culing the sweet products of Flora, or bowing in the temple with the thronged assembly of worshippers. For many even unworthy creatures may appear lovely and attract the admiring gaze of all that behold them, in the bright day of prosperity, when all above is sunshine and all beneath is flowers. Many heartless worshippers may congregate in the temple sacred to devotion, and bowing with the thronged assembly, from the power of sympathy, may rejoice in the general exultation, and for the time being seem to share all the ecstasies of devotion; and yet true religion may have no abiding place in their hearts, no influence over their lives; their religion has not passed the ordeal that would test its genuineness, they may, hence, deceive both themselves and others. But when the dark clouds of adversity have gathered, and its terrific thunders roar, and its vivid lightnings flash, and the bitter contents of sorrow's cup have been drank to the very dregs—when the pale hand of sickness and death have approached and snatched away the greatest and last comforts that earth could yield, the guide of youth and support of helplessness; if then female piety not only survives but even triumphs—if its subject, like Noah's ark, rise above the flood, or like his dove, gather the green olive of hope from the very wreck of nature—if she bend with un murmuring patience to the task assigned by heaven, with cheerful assiduity to the duties of filial affection—if, even losing all, she still kiss the rod which a Father employs to afflict her, and lean on the staff of his own Divine promise, while her hope is firmly anchored in heaven; that female is the perfection of woman's loveliness. Diadems and kingdoms, nay, worlds, are too mean a price to offer for her worth. The chamber of sickness and death

has disclosed both a loveliness and value in her which are above all price. Though pale and emaciated with watching, and care, and want of rest while ministering, like an angel, to the sick, and the dying, she thereby the more nearly resembles the pure spirits that stand before the throne, and are the swift-winged messengers of mercy, to bear the compassion of the Eternal to the suffering sons of sorrow. Religion, pure and undefiled, in all its native majesty and mildness, is enthroned in the consecrated temple of her heart, and smiles with heavenly benignity, through every tear that moistens her eye.—*Magazine and Advocate.*

#### MORALITY.

We feel the importance of reminding our brethren, who profess the soul-rejoicing doctrine of universal salvation, of the peculiar interest they have in leading a moral life. Our faith shows us that the reward of moral virtue is in itself and its inseparable consequences; therefore, we are sure that if we are virtuous, we shall enjoy its whole reward. Those who entertain a different belief, who vainly think that God's requirements are necessary only to procure his favor, and to turn away his vindictive wrath from them, are destitute of the most natural incentives to virtue, for it seems to them that the commands of God are designed for his own gratification, and not for his creatures' special benefit.

But we are led to contemplate God as a kind Father, a steady, fixed, unchangeable friend, who has no occasion to require any thing of us for any other cause than our own benefit. In this view of the moral precepts of our heavenly Father, we see that the least deviation from them is an equal violation of our own peace and happiness. And we have still another peculiar interest in maintaining a virtuous, moral life.—Those who oppose our doctrine are in the habit of thinking that we are an immoral people. The reason why they have this opinion is very evident. They suppose that the necessity of being virtuous in this life is that they may escape hell in the next, and as they are informed that we are not afraid of being sent to this dreadful place, they suppose, of course, that we think it is no matter how we live. Now as we wish to undeceive our opposers as fast as possible and by every justifiable means, it becomes us to be careful to maintain good works for their sakes as well as for our own convenience. By this method we should comply with our Savior's direction "Let your light shine before men, that they, beholding your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven."

H. B.

"Man is prone to sin as the sparks fly upward."  
*Tradition.*

The above sentiment has, with many people, passed into a proverb, and is really thought by them not only to be the sentiment but the language of inspiration: though in fact, it is nothing but tradition of the absurdest kind. If sin were most congenial to the nature of man, and righteousness entirely dissonant with his nature, man would be the most happy when [the most] sinful—he could be happy in no other element but sin. Every creature is happy in its natural element. Take the fish from the water into the air and it will perish—take the bird from the air and immerse it in water and death is the consequence; because it is taken from its native element and placed in one entirely unnatural. Now the Bible declares "*there is no peace to the wicked—they are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest—and the soul that sinneth, it shall die*"—which clearly demonstrates that sin is not the natural element of man, but unnatural and entirely discordant with his moral constitution.—*Magazine and Advocate.*



## CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

EDITED BY T. J. SAWYER AND P. PRICE, NEW-YORK,  
AND ABEL C. THOMAS, PHILADELPHIA.

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1833.

## NOTICE.

The 14th Lecture in reply to the Lectures of the Rev. Dr. Brownlee, against Universalism, will be delivered in the Orchard-street Church to-morrow evening, May 19.

## RELIGIOUS SERVICES

At the Orchard-street Church, and at the New Church in Sixth Avenue, foot of Amity-street commence regularly every Sabbath at half past ten in the morning—half past three in the afternoon, and at half past seven in the evening.

## BR. C. F. LE FEVRE,

Of Troy, is expected in this city on Sabbath next, (to-morrow) and will officiate part of the day at the Orchard-street Church, and part at the new church in Sixth Avenue, foot of Amity-street.

## CONVENTIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS.

The New-York State Convention of Universalists meets at Utica the last Wednesday in this month.

The Pennsylvania Convention, meets at Womelsdorf, Berks co. on the 25th and 26th inst.

The Southern Association, at Hartford, Conn. 22d and 23d inst.

The New-Hampshire Association at New-London, on the 22d and 23d inst.

The Boston Association at Haverhill, on the first Wednesday in June.

## ANCIENT AND MODERN PHARISEES.

Many articles have been written to show the similarity of feeling, doctrine and practice, between ancient Pharisees, and the Pharisees of modern times. But there are several points of dissimilarity which have been generally overlooked.

1st. Ancient Pharisees, I believe, never prohibited the people from listening to the "good tidings of great joy." Multitudes attended the ministrations of the word of life; and I do not recollect an instance in which they were forbidden so to do. No doubt, the Pharisees regretted the interest excited by the preaching of the Gospel; and strongly exerted themselves to prevent the people from accrediting the soul inspiring message. Whoever should confess the Savior was promptly "dealt with," (as Friends express it); and the terrors of "anathema" were vividly proclaimed. But, nevertheless, the Pharisees of old did not openly forbid the attendance of the people on the preaching of the Gospel. Men were even sent to hear the testimony of Jesus. Be sure they were sent to entrap him in his words; the motive was not commendable; yet we must give the Pharisees some credit for not openly exerting their influence to prevent the people from listening to the "good news" of salvation. Indeed, they encouraged the people to attend the Savior's meetings, by being present themselves.

But the Pharisees of modern date, caution, yea, openly forbid, their hearers to attend the Universalist meetings. "Go not near them; stand aloof!—for if you listen to their preaching, 'you will get some ideas into your heads which you will never be able to get out.' On peril of your soul's salvation, avoid them." By these means, thousands are prevented from hearing for themselves; and many whose desire to hear the Everlasting Gospel comes in conflict with their fear of the minister, compromise the matter by attending our meetings under cover of the night!—Men are not even sent to entrap us in our words—for fear the messengers should themselves be entrapped—as were some of the messengers of the Pharisees of old. The ministers

keep aloof—for should they attend our meetings, with whatever object, the spell would be broken; and the people would follow.

2d. Ancient Pharisees never attempted to prevent Jesus and his apostles from preaching and teaching in their temple and Synagogues. Various instances might be cited, in which the ministers of the "new and better covenant" delivered their testimony in buildings dedicated to another service. The Pharisees seemed disposed to liberality in this particular, at least. Though the temple was considered *holy* a man who was charged with having a devil was permitted to preach in it. He who was charged with casting out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils, was allowed to minister to the people within consecrated walls. He who was considered a "friend of publicans and sinners," and who was so in reality, openly preached where the "righteous" prayed. He who was considered "a gluttonous man and a wine bibber," was not prevented from lifting up his voice in buildings where the Pharisee had often said, "I thank thee Lord that I am not as other men."—I repeat it, the ancient Pharisees never attempted to prevent Jesus and his apostles from preaching and teaching in their Temple and Synagogues.

But, alas! for the Pharisees of modern times! Their temples of worship are closed against those who testify that the heavens must receive the Christ, "until the times of the restitution of all things." There are a few honorable exceptions—but generally speaking, the meeting-houses of all denominations are closed against Universalist Clergymen. "You have a devil," say our opposing brethren; "you preach the devil's doctrine; we will not allow you the use of our churches." To this I reply, "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more they of his household!" If they who charged Jesus with having a devil, did not make the charge an objection to allowing him the use of the Temple, why—the question may be carried out by the reader, and the analogy may also be noticed in detail. The particular under consideration presents a striking point of dissimilarity between ancient and modern Pharisees. The former were more liberal than are the latter.

3d. The ancient Pharisees evinced a willingness to discuss with Christ and his followers, the several points of difference in sentiment. They asked many questions of the Savior, and patiently awaited his replies. Besure, their motives were not commendable; they did not intend to acknowledge him as the Messiah, however satisfactory his answers might be; they hoped he would speak disrespectfully of Moses and the Prophets—which would have condemned him in the judgment of the people—or of Cæsar, which would furnish grounds of accusation to the Roman authorities. But still they evinced a willingness to discuss the points at issue, in the presence of the multitude.—Subsequently, the Apostles, especially Paul, reasoned with the Jews in the Synagogues. They spake for themselves; and the Pharisees were willing to hear them, and to enter into controversy with them.

How stands the matter in modern days? By whom is controversy avoided? By whom is it feared? By whom is reason denounced as carnal and delusive? These questions may readily be answered. Universalists are "ready always" to give a reason of the hope that is in them. We earnestly desire a discussion of the great and important question of salvation. Our religious periodicals are at the service of any respectable opponent. Controversy is invited—solicited—urged. We urge in vain—our solicitations are disregarded—our invitations are

not accepted. What shall we say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?"—Let the reader follow out these reflections, and he will perceive in the cited particular, a strong feature of dissimilarity between ancient and modern Pharisees.

4th. The Pharisees never charged Jesus nor his apostles with denying the validity of the Scriptures. It would have been foolishness, madness, to have brought such a charge against men who were constantly quoting the Scriptures in proof of their doctrine. The Pharisees were aware of this. They endeavored, however, to find a pretext for making the charge. Failing in the attempt, they asserted that Jesus denied, and that his disciples transgressed, the traditions of the elders. This was a grievous affair. *The traditions of the elders* were called in question, and what was worse, practically disregarded.—Jesus denied not the truth of the charge, but justified himself in condemning them. "Ye have made void the law of God through your traditions."—While this is remembered, let it not be forgotten, that the Pharisees never charged Jesus nor his apostles with denying the validity of the Scriptures—but only with denying the traditions of the Elders.

The point of dissimilarity is readily perceived. Universalists are continually appealing to "the law and the testimony" in proof of their distinguishing sentiment. Yet many modern Pharisees charge us with denying the validity of the Scriptures! The truth is, we deny the traditions of the elders, and affirm that thereby the law of God has been made void. This is the sticking point. We cannot receive the traditionary absurdity of an eternal principle of evil—not the heathen fable of endless misery, with its concomitants. And herein is the difficulty. We are charged with having a devil, because we do not believe in him; and are charged with denying the scriptures, because, in casting out devils we make no use of Beelzebub! And thus, and for similar reasons, the Savior was "despised and rejected of men."

But the point of dissimilarity between ancient and Modern Pharisees, must not be overlooked. The former did not charge Jesus with denying the validity of the Scriptures, but only with denying the traditions of the elders. We should have no objection to a similar procedure on the part of the latter. We cordially receive the scriptures, believing them to contain a revelation of the will of God in relation to his moral offspring; but we reject and disallow the authority of the traditionary creeds and commandments of men. Let us have the law of God in its purity. It calls for love to Him supremely, and to our neighbors as ourselves; and we have seen and do testify, that not one jot or tittle of this law shall pass until all be fulfilled. Amen. Even so be it. Amen.

A. C. T.

## LETTERS TO THE REV. DR. BROWNLEE—NO. XIV.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—

Under your third proposition we are lastly told in unequalled terms, that,

"3. Universalism is based on assumptions of the most heaven daring character. They assume that a denial of their doctrine represents God as a harsh, ferocious, cruel tyrant. Their writings and their speeches abound in declamation on this point. Some who are highly esteemed in private life, amiable in their characters, will weep over the statements of truth and reason, and exclaim, these things cannot be." \* \* \* The eternal duration of future punishment, is said to be inconsistent with God's character; but who will presume to sit in judgment on Him? Who can say what may be necessary as an example in the



government of millions of worlds? Man knows not, and therefore must be silent."

Universalism then is based on assumptions of the *most heaven daring character!* The candid reader is disposed to ask, How so? What are these "heaven daring assumptions?" You reply, "Universalists assume that a denial of their doctrine represents God as a harsh, ferocious, and cruel tyrant." Now, sir, I ask you what you find here so heaven daring? The Universalist is ready at any time to state his reasons for his opinion. He does say that the doctrine of endless misery, under any modification you may please to give it, represents Jehovah as a cruel and vindictive tyrant. Nor is this an assumption. It is a conclusion so obvious and necessary, that the mind, it would seem, must be blinded by prejudice, which does not perceive it. What does that doctrine teach? Simply, that *God will inflict torments un speakably severe and of endless duration on a large part of the human race—that he created them, as Calvinists believe, under an irrevocable decree, or, as Arminians contend, with an infallible foreknowledge, that this should be their fate—and that he will inflict these torments without benefitting, or designing to benefit, any single being thereby in heaven, earth, or hell!* If such be the nature of the doctrine, it ascribes a character to God which no language can express—which indeed for innate and unprovoked cruelty infinitely surpasses the loftiest powers of imagination. I stand perfectly stupefied—I am chilled with an indescribable horror—at the very thought! Nor can I flatter myself that I have misapprehended the genuine character of the doctrine. A careful examination of the statement of it just now made only confirms my opinion of its truth. 1. It is denied by no one that the doctrine of endless misery teaches that God will inflict torments, unspeakably severe and endless in duration upon a large part of the human family. This is but the definition of the doctrine, and to deny it, is to deny the doctrine itself. 2. That God must, from eternity have foreordained, or, at least, foreknown, the final destiny, of every human being, is, and can be questioned by no one, who acknowledges the Bible as his guide, or believes in the infinite perfections of the Deity. To suppose him to have created millions and millions of intelligent beings, without determining or foreknowing, whether their existence should prove to them a blessing or an intolerable and ceaseless curse, is to suppose him playing at a game of chance, (I would speak it reverently) in which the consequences of the hazard are so awful, as to blot every trace of benevolence from his character. It is to suppose him sportng with human misery, which is contrary both to reason and revelation. 3. That God inflicts these torments without benefitting, or designing to benefit, any being either in the present or future world, in heaven, on earth, or in hell, is the only part of the definition which is susceptible of doubt. This I know is loudly denied by believers in the doctrine. They are aware that this point must never be conceded. But how can it be avoided? Perhaps, theologians have found themselves embarrassed with no greater difficulties on any subject whatsoever. Endless misery has been assumed as true. Then the question has very naturally arisen, *Cui bono?* for what good end shall a part of mankind be made eternally wretched? Some tell us it will be "to the glory of the divine justice," and so will tend, in some way not easily explained, to promote the stability of the divine government. This subject affords a fruitful theme for declamation. "Were not God to inflict never ending punishment," you say, "the wicked would laugh him to scorn." You should have added, as is generally done, "Anarchy would

ensue, and the Almighty be hurled from his throne." For my own part I have little fear of such a catastrophe. I believe God is able to govern his universal empire without the aid of undying torture. Some tell us that the design of endless misery is to deter others from sin. But how this is to be effected has never yet been explained. This punishment, as it is inflicted only after the fate of every individual is sealed for eternity, cannot be of the remotest service, considered as example, in preventing crime. I speak here in relation to the human race. It is true you extend the idea of example in a most unwarrantable manner. You ask, "Who can say what may be necessary as an example in the government of millions of worlds? Man knows not and therefore must be silent." If I understand this remark, you virtually concede that in relation to our race, the example presented in the endless punishment of a part is expected to do no good, or, in other words, that this punishment is to us not an example at all. I am compelled to infer so from your manner. It is true under another head you tell us that "as to punishment, its ultimate end is to deter others," and you seem to more than intimate, that it is to deter other men. Here, however, you leave mankind, and reserve the efficacy of your example for the "millions of worlds" about us!! Apparently conscious of the weakness of your cause, you are driven by necessity to suppositions the most unreasonable. Who, sir, but a man who deeply felt his desperate situation would ever have appealed to mere speculations for proof of endless misery, or to avoid difficulties with which that doctrine is surrounded. The question, for what end? was evidently pressing upon you. Some answer must be given. You forsok the earth, and with one mighty effort, such as the occasion required, mounted to the stars. Even there you found only still deeper mystery. "Who knows what may be necessary as an example in the government of millions of worlds? Man does not and therefore, must be silent!" To ascertain the strength of this 'air castle,' I may observe that first, it is only probable that the "millions of worlds" about us are inhabited. Second, it is only probable that, if inhabited, their inhabitants are like ourselves. Whether they are tempted, and are sinners as we are, is still more doubtful. Third, granting that the other planets and the millions of stars are inhabited with intelligent and moral beings like ourselves, it is altogether improbable that the example of our suffering is designed to benefit them, while upon ourselves, as you seem willing to acknowledge, it is intended to exert no influence whatever! Here then we have your conclusion—a mere possibility, (for you contend for no more, "who knows what may be necessary," &c.) predicated on probabilities, which, if not weak in themselves, are still very foreign from every thing that concerns us on this topic. And yet this is the best, the only good end, which the champion of interminable misery can offer in favor of his dogma. He virtually acknowledges it can do neither the damned in hell nor the saints in heaven any good, but who knows says he, what saving influence it may exert as an example, on the imagined intelligences of the "millions of worlds?" And mark the logical conclusion. "Man knows nothing about it, therefore, he must be silent," i. e. take it for granted that such punishment is actually to subserve the most gracious purposes among the moral subjects of God's universal empire!!! Did I wish to render myself and my cause ridiculous, I would certainly adopt this method of reasoning.

With what plausibility then can it be pretended that endless misery either will, or was designed to, result in any good to any being in the wide Uni-

verse? To suppose it will benefit any individual of the human race, whether saint or sinner, is absurd, and you will not pretend it. And the idea which you advance that it may serve as an example in the government of millions of worlds, is if possible still worse. It rests on no single fact, it has not one analogy to support it—it is the mere child of an excited imagination. And, sir, I cannot but regard it as a most singular circumstance, that although the doctrine of endless misery has been popular for these last twelve or thirteen centuries, yet it has never been shown that any single good to any being in existence will result from the infliction of this punishment. True it has been believed, and perhaps, may now be, that the torments of hell will increase the happiness of heaven! I rejoice that you do not advance a sentiment so abominable. It is one which would degrade a Turkey; yet great names among professing christians might be given who have indulged the opinion. No, sir, you cannot propose one single good effect to be produced by the infliction of never ending torments. I say then fearlessly that the doctrine of such torments represents God as a harsh, cruel, and vindictive tyrant, who inflicts pain without any benevolent design, but on the contrary to make the sufferer endlessly wretched! You may call this "heaven daring assumption," you may call it anything you please, but, sir, will you attempt to prove it is so? Will you vindicate the moral character of God in connexion with this doctrine? If you will, you will do what has never yet been done.

But I am told this is "setting in judgment on God." This is saying what is consistent with the divine character, and what is not—it is telling God," to use your own language, "what he must do and what he must not do." The blinding power of Partialism is here most manifest. The Universalist is guilty of "heaven-daring assumption,"—of "horrible impiety,"—of every thing, in fine, irreverent and presumptuous, because he dares to judge that punishment, inflicted without a benevolent object, and without end, is inconsistent with the divine character. He reads in his Bible that "God is love," that he "is good to all and that his tender mercies are over all his works"—that he does not "afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." But from these passages he is allowed to draw no inference unfavorable to a popular but horrid dogma. If he does, we immediately hear the cry of "heaven daring blasphemy." He is charged with "sitting in judgment on God," and of presumptuously deciding what he may and what he may not do. But with the Limitarian there is no impiety, no presumption. He may assume that his opinion is true, and that it is perfectly consistent with the divine character. He may indeed, thereby ascribe a character to God that would disgrace any man on earth—that would become no being in the Universe but Satan himself; and this is all just and christian like. There is no "sitting in judgment on God" here. There is, there can be, nothing irreverent or "heaven daring" with him. Let me say in the words of my Master, "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

If it is "heaven-daring" to judge what is and what is not consistent with the divine character, then every reflecting christian must lie under that imputation. To know God, we must know his character and attributes. If we know him as a Universal Father, a kind and gracious being, such as he has been revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ, we must know what would and what would not comport with this character. It is no presumption, but on the contrary, it is our duty thus to judge of God. And I feel



It impossible to err in concluding that "the eternal duration of punishment is inconsistent with God's character." This is a conclusion not hastily formed, but is the result I think of candid and patient investigation. Nor has anything I have hitherto seen been calculated to weaken my convictions of its truth. Respectfully, &c., T. J. SAWYER.

Rev. W. C. BROWNLEE, D. D.

At a late meeting at the Chatham-Street Chapel in favor of the Sunday School Union, the following Resolution was offered by the Rev. Dr. DeWitt, Collegiate minister of the North and Middle Dutch Churches. It was understood that Dr. Brownlee was to have been present, but was unavoidably detained, and that Dr. DeWitt, his colleague appeared in his stead.

"Resolved, That the establishment of a Sunday School in every neighborhood in our land, in which the Sacred Scriptures shall be studied, and the doctrines of the cross inculcated, would furnish an admirable means of preventing ignorance, pauperism and crime, and would restrain the increase of infidelity, universalism and other forms of corrupted christianity among us, and lay deeply the foundations of pure doctrine and sound morality in the hearts of our youth, securing both the interests of religion and the stability of our government."

"And would restrain Infidelity, Universalism and other forms of corrupted Christianity!" Ah! Universalism, then, does at last possess something of the semblance of Christianity. Once even this would not be allowed it—it was rank, uncompromising infidelity. We are heartily glad Limitarians begin to show symptoms, even if it be ever so little, of more expansive feelings. We hope they will cherish them, and allow them to extend until the Universalist can meet with that kind of reception from the reputed Orthodox, which the Christian is ever bound to give his fellow man. Oh, what a mild—what a Christ-like spirit of charity does the resolution of the Rev. Dr. DeWitt and his colleague present. "Infidelity and Universalism!" How much of the Christian is exhibited in this pertinacious disposition of associating two principles so diametrically opposite. It cannot proceed from ignorance in the case, for the Rev Gentlemen know they are as opposite as the poles, and it must therefore resolve itself into cool deliberate slander.

We are not surprised that new and increased efforts are found necessary to "restrain," (to them) the alarming progress of Universalism, in this city, and elsewhere. The operations of only a few months past, we should think, had conclusively taught the lesson that men need only to be excited to reflection to cast off the traditional shackles of popular opinions. Our subscription list, in this city particularly, bears ample testimony to an increased interest in this subject. Were we to study pecuniary interest altogether, we should say at once—"rail on gentlemen—thunder out your blackest and most terrific anathemas—denounce our sentiments as the 'doctrine of devils,' ourselves as the 'off-scouring of creation,' and present to your excited congregations, this world as 'a very hell,' under the influence of our doctrine." Bad as we may be, however, we are not yet initiated into the doctrine of "doing evil that good may come," and we are therefore equally unwilling to desire others to "do evil," that "good may come" to ourselves. Though this slanderous and persecuting spirit is calculated, in the end, to add strength to our cause, and we know not but we may safely say, directly to accelerate it, yet as our opposers profess to be Christians, we had much rather they would exhibit the spirit of their Master,

notwithstanding our progress may not be quite so rapid.

If the Reverend Associates of the North and Middle Dutch Churches are so extremely solicitous to stay the progress of Universalism, we would, with all becoming modesty, suggest to them a more summary method of getting at the subject, by which they need not wait a generation or two for the fruits, but in which, if Universalism is what they pretend it is, they can strike the axe directly at the root of the evil. It is this—Let the Rev. Dr. Brownlee, as he has "thrown the glove," step into a Universalist Pulpit, before a Universalist audience, (he has had the opportunity once) and there expose the "deformity of the doctrine"—or into the columns of a Universalist Paper, and in a candid and Christian-like spirit show the utter irreconcilability of the doctrine with the Scriptures of Divine Truth. Here is the field for him to sow, and we will be bound, if his seed is good, he will be enabled to reap abundantly. But of this we may, perhaps, well despair; for they had doubtless, much rather *mould the youthful mind to their liking*, than to attempt to convince the judgments of men. P.

#### ORTHODOX SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

There are few of our readers who have not witnessed how zealously Limitarians have labored to gather children into their Sunday Schools, under the plea that there was nothing of a sectarian character taught therein; and with what facility they have denounced every one as "infidels, enemies of religion," &c. who presumed to oppose these schools on the ground that they were of a sectarian character. In view of these pretensions, we need only call the attention of the reader to a Resolution, (in another column) recently offered by the Rev. Dr. DeWitt, in a meeting at the Chatham-St. Chapel. It will there be seen that they do not hesitate, openly to avow their object, that "the doctrines of the cross" shall be "inculcated;" and what these "doctrines of the cross" would be, under the direction of a fanatical believer in endless misery, it requires no spirit of prophecy to determine. One simple question will settle the subject forever. Will they allow a Universalist to decide what these "doctrines of the cross" are?

We have no objection to Sabbath Schools on the principle that prompted their first formation—which was, to enable those who could not spare the time of week days, to give gratuitous instruction to poor children in the common branches of education, but we do most heartily abhor all, and every species of Sabbath School, in which children are to be trained up in the creeds and commandments of men. Tradition holds her iron sway quite too securely over the human mind, without prostituting the day set apart for praise and thanksgiving to our God, to the unholy purpose of riveting her chains still closer on her victim.

How perfectly does the spirit of this resolution tally with the sentiment long since expressed by Dr. Ely, and which has been steadily developing itself from that time to this, that "in ten, or at most twenty years" they might have a population reared up "under the influence of Sabbath Schools!" and that the "Presbyterians alone could bring half a million of VOTERS into the field." Oh if there is one spark of veneration for the principles which actuated our forefathers in casting of the yoke of tyranny, existing in the bosoms of their descendants, we adjure those descendants to think of these things. To compare, thoroughly compare, these half-breathed purposes with the daily movements of the actors therein, and then judge, as in the presence of God,

whether it is at all times safe to trust the mere professions of men, even though they may be presented under the sanctity of religion. We beg of Universalists at least, (and we have some at this moment in our mind's eye) not to place their children in these nurseries of a sentiment, they regard so repugnant to scripture, reason and common sense.

Were children merely taught the scriptures in their plain, evident connexion, we should joy in the extension of such information. But to put them under a course of study, even in the scriptures, and so direct and guide the pliant mind as to keep the image of an angry, revengeful God constantly before their vision, ready at every moment to hurl them into a lake of fire and brimstone, which is yawning before them, we most solemnly protest against. And as before intimated, we hope Universalists will look to it. Let them see to the instruction of their offspring themselves, rather than place them under the tuition of those who would grind every one into the very dust of the earth, who did not precisely accord with them, had they the power. P.

We owe an apology to our readers for many typographical errors which have appeared in our paper for a few weeks past. The bustle and confusion of the May-day season in New-York, and the extreme pressure of work in the office, must be our apology. We hope soon to be able to resume our usual care and attention of its columns. P.

We learn by the last Religious Inquirer that the ancient custom of *Fasting by Law*, has just been abolished by the Legislature of Connecticut, now in session at Hartford. Formerly it has been the annual custom of the Governor to issue his Proclamation for a Public Fast, and such has been the law of the land, that the day has been held as sacred as the Sabbath. In the technical terms of the Proclamation, "All servile labor and vain recreation on said day are by law forbidden!" So that a person must bow to the mandate of the law, even if he could not fast "in spirit and in truth." We are glad to see Connecticut shake off this relic of a legal establishment. There is little virtue in a Religion that requires the authority of the state to enforce it—that is not voluntary in its offering of thanks or supplications to the Supreme Ruler of all the earth. P.

#### PHILADELPHIA.

We cannot but feel under strong obligations to our friends in Philadelphia for the handsome accession to our List of subscribers there within a week or two. Every effort will be made to have them served punctually. Should any errors occur in the delivery, subscribers will please give immediate information to A. C. THOMAS, 132 Chestnut-st. and they will be promptly rectified.

#### PEWS IN THE ORCHARD-ST. CHURCH.

Persons desirous of procuring seats in the Orchard-st. church, can make application to the Sexton at the church on Sundays, or at the office of the Christian Messenger, No. 2 Marble-Building, Chatham-Square, at any time through the week, as a plan of the church is always kept there, for inspection.

#### MARRIED.

In Philadelphia, on the 14th ult. by Ev. L. F. W. Andrews, Mr. Samuel Tomlin, and Miss Matilda, daughter of the late John Markey, all of the Northern Liberties.

On Sunday evening, 5th inst. by Ev. A. C. Thomas, Mr. Henry B. Williamson and Miss Eliza Johnston.

#### RELIGIOUS NOTICES.

Br. Thomas F. King, from Portsmouth, N. H. will preach in North-Salem on the second Sabbath in June next, (9th.)

Br. S. J. Hillyer will preach in Kingston, N. Y. Friday evening, the 24th inst.; and at Cairo, Sunday the 26th.

Br. B. B. Hallod will preach in Williamsburgh, Sunday evening the 19th inst.



## OUR INFANT YEARS.

BY MISS J. H. KINNEY.

"Our infant years, is it not beautiful?  
The light that hovers round them?"—*Prentice.*  
It is depraved (so many say) the nature  
Of a sweet, sinless child, that all its thoughts,  
Its beautiful, glad thoughts, which fling the rays  
Of heaven's own perfect innocence upon  
Features of even seraphic loveliness,  
That these are but the serpent's subtle train,  
Coiling within the depths of the young heart.  
With an all poisoning influence, and that  
Each avenue of the unpractised soul  
Is saturate with the dark flood of sin.  
And is it so? Oh! thou whose whitened locks  
Bespeak a lengthened life's experience,  
I do appeal to thee. Where, where 'mid all  
The varied recollections of the past,  
Where rests the ken of thy dim, sorrowing eye,  
With most of yearning fondness?

"Oh! upon childhood, there is nought  
So linked with every holy thought,  
No spot in all life's travels given,  
So radiant with the smiles of heaven;  
No voice that with such freshness comes,  
From memory's cold and darkened rooms,  
As that whose tones were bland and free,  
The voice of hallowed infancy.

Pure as the first soft breath of Spring,  
Was all my heart's imagining:  
I loved the beauteous earth and sky,  
The trees and flowers—I scarce knew why—  
I loved the glorious noonday sun,  
I loved each face I looked upon;  
And gratefully my bosom glowed,  
To him who had such gifts bestowed.

Time never slacks. Dark years have cast  
Their shadows o'er the blissful past;  
Dark toiling years of sin and strife,  
Hang bleakly o'er the tide of life,  
Yet flashes up its narrow stream,  
A ray from childhood's sunny beam,  
Like day springs from the realms of light,  
To bless with heaven my longing sight."  
Then cease, O ye perverters of the truth  
Ye, ye who stamp the loveliest of God's works  
With hideous depravity—and make  
Your Savior's\* words but void, unmeaning things.  
Forbear! and when ye kneel to crave a blessing  
For your young, precious ones, beseech him not  
To change by grace their hard and stubborn nature,  
But that his kind and pitying hand will keep  
Apart from sin, their pure, untarnished spirits.  
*Herald and Watchman.*

\*And Jesus said, suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.—*xix, 14.*

## REMEMBER ME.

There are not two other words in the language that call back a more fruitful train of past remembrances of friendship, than these. Look through your library, and when you cast your eyes upon a volume that contains the name of an old companion, it will say—*remember me.* Have you an ancient album—the repository of the mementos of early affection? turn over its leaves, stained by the finger of time—sit down and ponder upon the names enrolled on them; each speaks, each says—*remember me.* Go into the crowded church yard, among the marble tombs, read the simple and brief inscriptions that perpetuate the memory of departed ones; they too have a voice that speaks to the heart of the living: and it says—*remember me.* Walk in the hour of evening twilight, amid the scenes of our early rambles; the well known paths, the winding streams, the overspreading trees, the green and gently sloping banks will recall the dreams of juvenile pleasure, and the recollections of youthful companions; they too bear the treasured injunction—*remember me.*  
And this is all that is left at last of the wide

circle of early friends. Scattered by fortune, or called away by death, or thrown without our band by the changes of circumstances, or of character—in time we find ourselves left alone with the recollection of what they were. Some were our benefactors, and won us by their favors, others were kind, and amiable and affectionate, and for this we esteemed them; others again, were models of virtue, and shared our praise and admiration. It was thus a little while, and then, the chances of the world broke in upon the delightful intercourse; it ceased. Yet, still, we do all we can to discharge the one sacred and honest and honorable debt—we remember them.

The tribute, too, of remembrance which we delight to pay to others, we desire for ourselves. The wish for applause; the thirst for fame; the desire that our names should shine down to posterity in the glory of recorded deeds; is a feverish, unhappy passion, compared with the ambitious desire to retain even beyond the span of life, the affections of the warm hearted few who shared our joys and sorrows in the world. I once read the brief inscription—"Remember me," on a tomb stone in a country church yard, with a tear, that the grave of Bonaparte would not have called forth.

But whom do we always remember with affection? the virtuous, the kind, the warm hearted; those who have endeared themselves to us by the amiableness of their characters. It is the mind, the disposition, the habits, the feelings of our friends which attach us to them most strongly; which form the only lasting bond of affection; which alone can secure our affectionate remembrance.

Then, if we would be remembered with the kindest feelings; if we would be embalmed in the memory of those we love; if we desire that when fortune, or fate, shall separate us from our friends they may long think of us; we must possess ourselves the same character we love in others. Never was there a more noble line written in the history of man than this—"The first emotion of pain he ever caused—was caused by his departure."

## THE ORPAAN BOX.

How interesting he appears to every feeling mind! A child robbed of its mother excites universal commiseration and affection from every bosom. We look forward with anxiety to every future period of his life; and our prayers and our hopes attend every step of his journey. We mingle our tears with his, on the grave of her, whose maternal heart has ceased to beat; for we feel that he is bereaved of the friend and guide of his youth! His father would, but cannot, supply his loss. In vain the whole circle of his friendships, blend their efforts to alleviate his sorrows, and to fill the place occupied by departed worth; a mother must be missed every moment, by a child who has ever known and rightly valued one, when she sleeps in the grave. No hand feels so soft as hers; no voice sounds so sweet; no smile is so pleasant! Never shall he find again in this wide wilderness, such sympathy, such fidelity, such tenderness, as he experienced from his mother! The whole world was moved with compassion for that motherless child, but the whole world cannot supply her place to him.—*Collyer.*

## PROSPECTUS

For the 3d vol. of the Messenger, to be published simultaneously at New-York and Philadelphia, under the title of

NEW-YORK CHRISTIAN MESSENGER AND PHILADELPHIA UNIVERSALIST.

The recent change in supplying our Philadelphia Patrons with the Messenger induces us thus early to present the public with Proposals for publishing the 3d vol. as noticed above. No

essential change will be made in the course of the paper, unless it may be to avail ourselves of every possible opportunity of increasing the talent and interest in its columns. It will, therefore, in the language it has ever held forth to the world, continue to "plead the cause of as slandered and persecuted denomination of Christians—the UNIVERSALISTS;" endeavor to inspire confidence among its friends, and to induce as far as possible the thoughtless and unconcerned, and even opposers, to come forward into the field of examination and "reason together" on the great and glorious doctrines of a world's reconciliation to God.

Its motto may be, perhaps, the surest index of its character. It breathes neither wrath nor fury to the children of men, but on the contrary, it points to a peaceful messenger on the mountain top, proclaiming "good tidings," and "publishing peace." "*How beautiful upon the mountains, are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.*"

With unfeigned gratitude to the Universalist public for the many tokens of approbation bestowed upon our paper for the 18 months it has now been in existence, we submit these Proposals for the third volume, referring simply to the past, as a pledge for the future.

## CONDITIONS.

The "N. Y. Christian Messenger and Philadelphia Universalist," will be published simultaneously in New-York and Philadelphia, every Saturday morning, on a royal sheet, quarto form, and close print, at \$2 per annum, in advance, or \$2 50 if not paid within the first six months. The first No. will appear on the first Saturday in Nov. next.

Subscribers in New-York and Philadelphia will be promptly served by Carriers, and all possible care will be observed in the Mailing department, that subscribers may regularly receive their papers.

The publishing office in New-York is at No's. 2 and 3 Marble Building, Chatham Square, and in Philadelphia, for the present, at No. 132 Chesnut-street, adjoining the United States Bank.

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P. PRICE,  
Publisher and Proprietor.

## UNIVERSALIST BOOKS.

The following Universalist Books are kept constantly for sale at the Messenger office, 2 and 3 Marble Building, Chatham-Square, New York.

Christian Messenger, Volume I. bound, 2 dolls.  
Murray's Life, with preface and notes, 75 cents.  
Ancient History of Universalism, from the age of the apostles to the Reformation. Price \$1.20.  
Modern History of Universalism, from the Reformation to the present time. Price \$1.20.

Ballou's Works. Treatise on Atonement, 75 cents  
Notes on the Parables 75. Sermons on Important Doctrinal Subjects, 37 1-2.

and Satan, and the terms rendered everlasting, forever &c. 1.25. Essays on the Intermediate State, 1.25 Letters to Hudson, in reply to his attack on the Essays  
Streeters Universalist Hymn Book, different qualities and prices, 60 cents to \$1.75.

Smith on Divine Government, showing that God fore-ordained human events, and is conducting all things,

Winchester's Dialogues, a highly useful and instructive work, in which the objections to Universalism, particularly those founded on the words everlasting, forever, &c. are fully and triumphantly answered. 75.

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## UNIVERSALIST BOOKS.

Balfour's Works; Ballou's do; Smith on Divine Government; Pickering's Lectures on Revelation; Winchester's Dialogues; Life of Murray; Pettipiece on Divine Goodness; Ancient History of Universalism; Modern Universalism; Universalist Expositor. For sale by A. C. THOMAS, 132 Chesnut-st. Philad.

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